

## Buckingham Park Mine Closure Project

Abandoned mines pose safety and liability issues throughout Colorado. Colorado's rich mining history left more than 23,000 old mines scattered across the State. The Buckingham Park Mine Closure Project includes twenty-seven (27) hazardous mine openings located in Boulder County, Colorado. The mine features are located in drainages along James Creek, Fourmile Creek, Lefthand Creek and Sherwood Drive. These sites are abandoned hard rock gold and silver mines that operated predominantly between the 1890s and the early 1900s. Many of the features are in close proximity to private residences, and nearly half of the sites are in close proximity to Buckingham Park and designated camp sites that are heavily used by recreational tourist. The Division of Reclamation, Mining and Safety (DRMS), working in conjunction with the U.S. Office of Surface Mining, the United States Forest Services and Boulder County Open Space, safeguard the entrances of hazardous inactive and/or abandoned mine openings using grates, bat grates and backfill.

DRMS utilized Colorado Correctional Industries (CCi) as the general contractor for the Buckingham Park Project. Since 1977, CCi (a division of the Colorado Department of Corrections) has worked to improve the lives of incarcerated men and women, reduce the tax burden of Colorado citizens and assist the CDOC in addressing the safety and well-being of citizens, victims, staff and offenders. The opportunities for self-improvement and meaningful work skills provided by CCi for incarcerated offenders help prepare these individuals for returning to free society.

The Buckingham Park Project required a CCi crew that consisted of eighteen (18) offenders and two (2) supervisors. The crew were able to camp for many nights near the project site before returning back to prison. Most of the sites were difficult to reach and required hand labor. Two of the mine sites required the CCi crew to fabricate a make-shift bridge to cross James Creek. The remoteness of such projects tends to only leave a handful of contractors willing to do the work, potentially increasing the cost of the project. Project partners, including the USFS and Boulder County Open Space, also contributed greatly to the project resulting in significant savings of OSM dollars, which in turn can be applied to other safeguarding projects in Colorado.